

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03
SCS-03 SCA-01 PPT-01 /062 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2067

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, CZ
SUBJECT: TREATMENT OF JOURNALISTS

REF SCHMIDT-FROWICK TELCON FEBRUARY 9

1. PAUL HOFFMAN OF NYT, CURRENTLY ON FEBRUARY 5-12 VISIT TO PRAGUE, TELLS US THAT HE HAS SO FAR HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH SURVEILLANCE, EVEN THOUGH HE HAS INTERVIEWED A NUMBER OF MOST PROMINENT CHARTER 77 ACTIVISTS. HIS RELATIONS WITH MFA PRESS SECTION HAVE ALSO BEEN CORDIAL. PRESS SECTION DEPUTY CHIEF SMID HAS ASSURED HIM THAT HE WILL HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH VISAS. HOFFMAN, RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO NYT BUREAU VIENNA, WILL BE TESTING THIS.

2. OUR NATO COLLEAGUES FOUND NOTHING VERY UNUSUAL IN DETENTION OF NBC NEWSMAN COLLITT AND CONFISCATION OF HIS NOTES. ACCORDING TO NETHERLANDS AND FRG AMBASSADORS, DUTCH TV TEAM WAS STOPPED AT PRAGUE AIRPORT AND TAKEN TO A LOCAL JAIL FOR QUESTIONING BEFORE BEING RELEASED AFTER 24 HOURS DETENTION AND AN FRG MAGAZINE "STERN" REPORTER WAS SEARCHED AT BORDER WHEN LEAVING CZECHOSLOVAKIA. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS DEMANDED THEIR NOTES AND TAPES, BUT WERE TOLD THAT THEY HAD BEEN SENT OUT BY OTHER MEANS. IT IS NOT CLEAR, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THESE JOURNALISTS ENTERED ON TOURIST VISAS AND WERE, IN EFFECT, "FAIR GAME" FOR CUSTOMS
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INSPECTORS. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF SEVERAL INSTANCES OF CONFISCATION OF BOOKS FROM AMERICAN TOURISTS ENTERING CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER OUR RECENT PROTESTS ABOUT TREATMENT OF JOURNALISTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROPER TREATMENT SO FAR GIVEN HOFFMAN. GOC HAS NOT SHOWN ANY CONSISTENT PATTERN RECENTLY IN DEALING WITH US JOURNALISTS. GETTLER OF WASHINGTON POST WAS

THE ONLY ONE HARRASSED WHILE IN THE COUNTRY AND COLLITT THE ONLY
ONE BOTHERED WHEN CROSSING THE BORDER. ONE AREA OF CONSISTENCY
HAS BEEN REGULAR REFUSAL OF VISA TO MURRAY SEEGER OF LA TIMES,
AND WE CANNOT YET DETECT ANY CHANGE IN GOC ATTITUDE IN REGARD TO
HIS LATEST APPLICATION (STATE 020008).
BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 11-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, SOPN, CZ
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